

CEO E-Briefing

A weekly report to City Council and the community

September 23, 2011

No. 14



CEO's Message



Seeing the forest for the trees

At the front end of the 20th century, local farmers planted a line of eucalyptus trees to serve as a windbreak and probably a property line along what's now Irvine Avenue, a street that bisects Costa Mesa and Newport Beach.

At the time, Eastside Costa Mesa consisted of a quilt work of five-acre farms. Their crops included beans, sweet potatoes, corn, tomatoes, and strawberries. Over the decades, dirt roads turned into paved streets and agriculture gave way to housing developments.

But the row of eucalyptus trees on Irvine Avenue remained, serving as the last tangible evidence of the Eastside's farming roots.

After a century or so of standing sentry on Costa Mesa's eastern border, the eucalyptus trees were removed this week, having been deemed a danger to the public by a team of arborists. The report came a few days after a motorist was killed on Irvine Avenue in a freak accident by a falling eucalyptus tree.

A drive along eucalyptus-less Irvine Avenue will never be the same. The so-called Eucalyptus Curtain has fallen quickly and unexpectedly, along with a beloved piece of Costa Mesa history. The cities of Costa Mesa and Newport Beach had no other choice, but that fact doesn't make it any less painful—especially because the chain of events started with an unimaginable tragedy.

Soon, new trees will be planted where the eucalyptus once stood. I'm looking forward to that day.

Tom Hatch, chief executive officer, City of Costa Mesa



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Stories by Department

CEO's Office

- Seeing the forest for the trees
- City's "Costa Mesa Minute" daily video show debuts today
- City looking for volunteers to serve on committees
- October: The season for study sessions
- Neighbors-for-Neighbors event rained out
- Council Follow-up
- Notes from the CEO's Office
- Homeless Task Force outlines its 7 goals
- On the calendar

Development Services

- University of Phoenix submits \$1.4-million remodeling plan
- Bel Bambini schedules Grand Opening in October

Fire

- Notes from the Fire Department

Police

- It's time to hoop it up!

Secret Spot

- Do you know this local landmark?

Making History

- 1920s Costa Mesa Fire Department

Final Shot

- Costa Mesa sunset



Comments or suggestions, please contact william.lobdell@costamesaca.gov



City of Costa Mesa



Costa Mesa City Hall

CEO's Office



City's "Costa Mesa Minute" daily video show debuts today

The City of Costa Mesa launches a daily video show today anchored by Dane Bora that will feature news and information about Costa Mesa. "Costa Mesa Minute" will be shown throughout the day on Channel 24 on Time Warner Cable and on Channel 99 on AT&T's U-verse. "Costa Mesa Minute" will also be posted on the City's Facebook page and website home page.

City looking for volunteers to serve on committees

The Costa Mesa City Council is seeking community members to serve on the following Council Committees: Cultural Arts (four vacancies plus four alternate member vacancies); Historical Preservation (one vacancy plus one alternative member vacancy); Redevelopment and Residential Rehabilitation (3R) (five vacancies and two alternate member vacancies); and Investment Oversight (one vacancy and one alternative member vacancy); and Costa Mesa Senior Center Board of Directors (one vacancy to represent City through Oct. 2012).

For more information, click [here](#).

October: The season for study sessions

In October, three important City Council study sessions have been scheduled. On Oct. 11, actuarial and CalPERS expert John Bartell will give a presentation on the City's pension, unfunded pension liabilities, future costs and ways to reduce the liabilities. On Oct. 20, a presentation will be made on the Banning Ranch housing development that will border Westside Costa Mesa. And on Oct. 25, an analysis of the City's worker's compensation program will be given. The study sessions will start at 4:30 p.m. in Conference Room 1A.



Secret Spot

Somewhere in Costa Mesa you might recognize this bit of local scenery.

Hint: You have good taste if you are familiar with this.

To get the whole picture, see page [4](#).

CEO's Office (Continued)



Neighbors-for-Neighbors event rained out

The 37th bi-annual Neighbors for Neighbors event was recently rained out, though senior citizens at a local mobile home park will still get their homes painted by volunteers in the coming weeks.

The rain out was especially disappointing since City staff and community organizations had prepared for months to paint six mobile homes for low-income families.

As city staff was setting up early Saturday morning, dark clouds covered the Costa Mesa Mobile Estates. Rain, lightning, thunder and even hail fell from the sky. For safety reasons, the community event had to be canceled.

Still, Housing and Community Development is grateful to the following participants: Parks and Recreation and Public Works staff members, Nancy Clark and Associates, Palm Harvest Church, Christ Lutheran Church, GAP, Starbucks, Sam Clark and other individual volunteers.

Many thanks to the following donors for their contributions: Vista Paint, Griswold Industries, C.J. Segerstrom & Sons, South Coast Plaza, Arnel Commercial Properties, Costa Mesa Newport Rifle Association, Ralphs, Ware Disposal, Ganahl Lumber, Scott Fazekas and Associates Inc., Barr & Clark, Mesa Verde Plaza, Stradling, Yocca Carlson & Rauth, Nancy Clark, Jamba Juice, Nestle Water North America Inc., Sheppard Mullin Richter & Hampton LLP, UPS Store #3956, See's Candy Shops Inc., South Coast Repertory, Oh Those Donuts, Connell Chevrolet, Angels Baseball, Dodgers Baseball, Ducote & Associates, Native Foods, Mother's Market, Shirley's Bagels, Maggiano's Little Italy, Costco, Wild Rivers Water Park, Ruth Helenic, and In-N-Out Burgers.

—Silvia Kennerson



Council Follow-up

An update on some of the questions and concerns raised at the last City Council meeting.

There was debate about what percentage of the City's budget is spent on employee compensation. What are the real numbers?

The percentage of salary and benefits from the proposed 2011-2012 budget was: 74.2% of the General Fund and 72.8% of the citywide budget (excluding capital improvement projects).

The percentage of salary and benefits from the soon-to-be-released adopted 2011-2012 budget is: 72.7% of the General Fund and 71.2% of the citywide budget (excluding capital improvement projects).

The City is looking to reach out more in the community and provide its resources to local events and nonprofits. Should the City have a policy to make sure it's not providing a gift of public funds?

Yes. City Attorney **Tom Duarte** and Public Affairs Manager **Dan Joyce** will be developing the policy for council review in the near future.

What's the status of the dissolution of the Airborne Law Enforcement Services (ABLE) program? Have the helicopters been sold yet?

Police Chief **Tom Gazsi** will have a report in the next edition of CEO E-Briefing. The helicopters have not been sold, but the process is underway.

(continued on page 4)

CEO's Office (Continued)

Council follow-up (Continued)

A council member expressed a desire to have the City assist employees who would like to set up a private company and submit a proposal for outsourcing services. Will that happen?

City Attorney **Tom Duarte** is researching whether it's legal for the City to do this. We'll have an update soon in CEO E-Briefing.

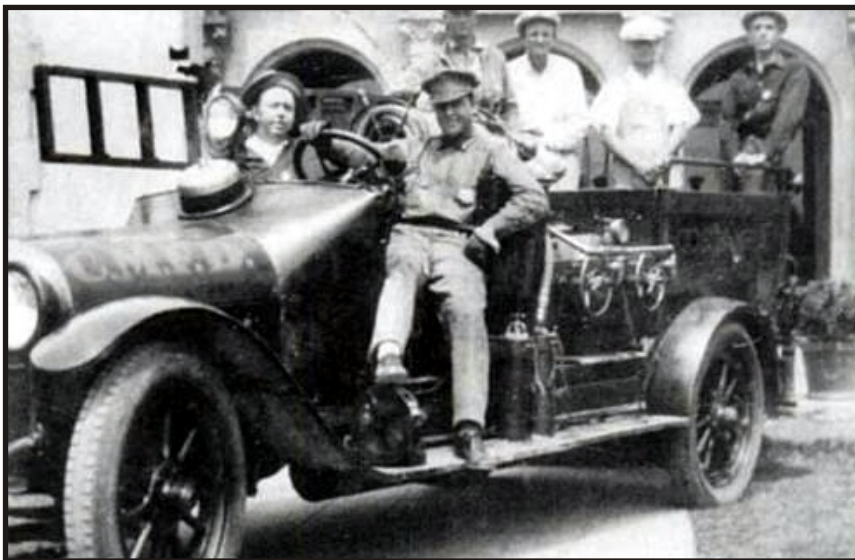
A concern was raised about whether prevailing wages needed to be paid under the Davis-Bacon Act if building inspection services were outsourced.

The Davis-Bacon Act requires prevailing wages to be paid on the construction, repairs or remodeling of public works projects. Building inspection services provide inspections, not construction-type work. In addition, the inspections are normally conducted on private businesses.

Will the City Council consider raising the fees for business licenses as a way to generate more revenue?

Yes. In the 2011-12 budget, the Council approved funds to hire a consultant to research and propose an appropriate increase in business licenses, which would need to be approved by Costa Mesa voters in the next election in June 2012. The consultant is expected to be hired within the next two months.

Making History



Though the town was unincorporated, in 1925 the Costa Mesa community got its first fire chief, and his first job was to organize a volunteer fire department. Local merchants paid \$4 annually to join the Chamber of Commerce, and membership included fire protection.

Notes from the CEO's Office

The initial search for a new assistant chief executive officer didn't turn up the perfect candidate so another recruitment is underway ... For the next few months, Public Services Director **Peter Naghavi** will serve as interim assistant chief executive officer ... City Engineer **Ernesto Munoz** will fill in as interim public services director ... The City will hold a "street-paving" ceremony on Sept. 29 at 10 a.m. in a Mesa Verde neighborhood to highlight the more than \$11-million in local street repairs the City will be making in the 2011-12 fiscal year ...

Secret Revealed



Answer: Eat Chow, one of Costa Mesa's smallest—and most critically acclaimed—restaurants. It's in the 100 block of E. 18th Street (though its official address is 1802 Newport Blvd).

CEO's Office (Continued)

Homeless Task Force outlines its 7 goals

The Costa Mesa Homeless Task Force recently detailed its seven top goals to reduce homeless-related problems in the City. You can read the details [here](#). The priorities are:

1. To protect the health and safety of Costa Mesa residents through enforcement of "civility" laws and provision of public improvements.

These avenues include the establishment of ordinances that create the means by which the city can enforce desired outcomes, the personnel and standard operating procedure of law enforcement to manage infractions and the political buy-in from parties involved in the process to reach an acceptable outcome for the community.

2. Proactive problem resolution with regard to high crime/vice hotels that cater to transient population enforcement of local codes and ordinances at problem halfway houses.

These establishments attract not only homeless substance abusers but are also utilized/owned by people outside of the City and State as well as law enforcement in other jurisdictions.

3. Centralized in-house homeless services coordination.

Because homeless services affect so many governmental jurisdictions and outside entities, it is suggested that one department in the City be responsible for overall coordination of homeless services and complaints.

4. Integrating law enforcement, mental health and legal strategy as a three-pronged approach to homelessness.

5. Create permanent supportive housing and possible access center.

These facilities would only be accessed by Costa Mesa homeless residents based on a definition conceived by the Homeless Task Force. Location of such a facility will be challenging to ensure that impacts to surrounding neighborhoods are mitigated.

6. Review interim housing options.

There may be options to provide motel vouchers to Costa Mesa Homeless residents until such time as permanent housing is constructed.

7. Promotion of Lions Park as a local venue for special events.

This combined with more proactive law enforcement and effective programming could help draw even more people to this park and transform it from a homeless encampment to an exciting recreational venue.

On the calendar

Sept 28 WED The Parks and Recreation Commission is scheduled to meet at 6 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

Sept 29 THURS The Airborne Law Enforcement Services (ABLE) Board meeting is scheduled at 9 a.m. in the Police Chief's Conference Room at Police Headquarters, 99 Fair Drive.

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Development Services

University of Phoenix submits \$1.4-million remodeling plan

The **University of Phoenix** submitted plans into plan check for the initial review of 6,887 square feet of tenant improvements for its educational center at 3150 Bristol Street. The proposed work includes the installation of partition walls, the addition of new finishes, along with miscellaneous plumbing, electrical and mechanical work. The project when completed is anticipated to have a valuation of \$1.4 million.

—Hilda Veturis



Bel Bambini schedules Grand Opening in October

Bel Bambini, an upscale baby boutique, has recently been granted a building permit for a 1,971-square-foot remodel of the second floor of an existing retail building at 1802 Newport Blvd. (formerly "The Closet"). The work includes new windows, doors, reframing of the existing roof, and the addition of an elevator and a new restroom.

Upon completion of the work, the first and second-floor retail space will become the second home of Bel Bambini, which specializes in high-end, eco-friendly products including apparel and furniture. This retailer is currently in West Hollywood and anticipates celebrating the grand opening of its second location on Oct. 7. This project is valued at \$200,000.

—Rebecca Robbins



Costa Mesa residents were happy to hear the news about the Bel Bambini opening.

Fire Department

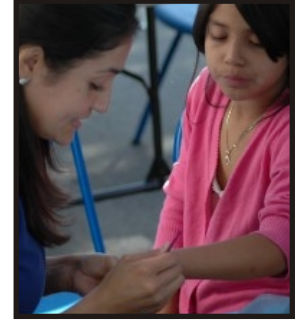
Notes from the Fire Department

Costa Mesa's Community Emergency Response Team

(CERT) program recently graduated 22 new members thanks to support from Battalion Commanders Kevin Diamond and Bill Kershaw, Sgt. Vic Bakkila, and volunteer instructors Larry Kinsella, Dee Chester, Sam and Kim Clark ... The next course will begin January ... The Fire Department has received a donation of 50 smoke alarms and 50 carbon monoxide detectors from the Kidde Corp. The department will distribute the alarms through the Home Safe Home program, which provides a home safety inspection for seniors.

—Brenda Emrick

Police Department



It's time to hoop it up!

The 8th annual C3 (Cops, Church, Community) Basketball Tournament and Community Fair will be held at the Downtown Recreation Center from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Oct. 29.

In the 3-on-3 basketball tournament, each team will consist of a police officer, a church leader and a community member.

The community fair will feature games for kids, raffles, food, and information about local agencies and activities. The Kids Area will include a Bounce House, Game Truck, face painting, crafts and more!

The events are hosted by the Mika Community Development Corp., whose mission is to identify and equip leaders in low-income neighborhoods to build communities.

If you are interested in playing in the tournament or if your nonprofit is interested in hosting a booth for \$25, email [here](#).

Final Shot



Costa Mesa at sunset can produce a dazzling sight. (Courtesy of the Costa Mesa Conference and Visitor Bureau.)